

Target Front

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Summary: A new story set in the Half Life 1 universe. Corporal Adam Freidman is a Marine left behind in the withdrawal. Follow his adventures as he tries to escape Black Mesa.

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****CHAPTER ONE: WELCOME TO THE MAD HOUSE****

"TARGET FRONT!"

Corporal Adam Freidman spun around in time to see a hideous alien beast cut down by SAW fire. Another one was following close behind. Freidman levelled his M4 and fired at the creature. Round after round slammed into its leathery hide, but still it kept coming. Freidman's weapon clicked as the last round left the magazine. His fingers fumbled to the trigger of the underslung 40mm grenade launcher. Barely aiming, he fired. The alien exploded in a shower of putrescent green blood.

"Holy shit, man! Sweet fuckin' shot!"

The voice was Thompson, the SAW gunner, who was kneeling beside Freidman. He grinned widely at the terrified marine, then continued pouring fire on the approaching enemy.

Freidman was 19 years old. Fresh out of boot. He'd never expected to find himself here. Goddamn, it felt like a movie, or a videogame, it was never real. It was almost Christmas, for crying out loud. Here he was, in an era of post-Cold War peace, fighting for his life against something hideous.

Freidman and Thompson were the last two survivors of their squad, although they didn't know it. Along with the rest of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, they'd landed on a dusty desert complex somewhere in New Mexico. The details were sketchy. One minute they were doing PT in Santego, Arizona, the next they were flying in

V-22's with full combat loadout. Most thought it was a babysitting job. It seemed like it when they first touched down. They'd landed in a large, disused military base in the middle of a vast desert plain, bisected by a river " not that it really justified the title of river, more a piddle in the sand. The Marines wandered through the buildings, checking every room, CQB, feeling really cool.

Then the shooting started.

It was quite a while before Freidman saw his first alien. It had burst through a wall near where he and his squad had hunkered down after clearing yet another empty building. The thing had an arm in its chest and was shooting these weird bee-things that smacked into Sergeant Petrell's chest and burst it open. Corporal Kyle had blown the thing's head off with his twelve-gauge.

From there on, things became a haze. The squad were suddenly not on exercise, but in a war. They were laying mines, setting up sniper spots. They watched at mechanized marine units flooded up the access road, the troopers dismounting from the machines and heading into the buildings, some said down below. At one point, when Freidman put his ear to the ground, he was sure he could hear shooting coming from beneath the rocks.

They'd set up near a cargo storage facility, full of large shipping crates. Kyle, the new C/O, had placed them in the shipping/receiving office, making sure he could cover the entire yard. The place was surrounded by a high brick wall that kept the desert out. After setting up, the Marines just sat there, listened to the gunfire and heard the combat reports on the radio. The Marines on air talked of engaging and eliminating hostiles. Every so often a report for aid would come through, or from a special forces unit trying to hunt down a guy named Freeman. None of it made sense to Freidman.

Then, as the sun started to cast long evening shadows over the crate yard, Kyle had got a call from the Company C/O, calling him over to the nearby ordnance facility for a briefing. It seemed as if they were pulling out. Freidman had mixed feelings. On the one hand, he was glad to be out of whatever the hell this was, on the other, annoyed that he hadn't fired his weapon. Kyle disappeared with the rest of the squad, leaving Freidman and Thompson to cover the entrance and exit to the office.

That was two hours ago. Neither Marine had heard from Kyle since. Thompson had tried the radio, but there was no response. The gunfire had died down, and soon an unearthly hush fell over the base, punctuated only by the occasional shuddering burst of a different rifle.

And so, that was the situation when the aliens came. Freidman opened the breech on the grenade launcher, slapped in a fresh round, and recocked it. He could hear the sound of feet on metal. Peering out through the door, he saw another alien stamping on the top of the cargo crate, attempting to sneak up on him.

"Clever," he said, aiming the grenade launcher at the creature before dispatching it in another gooey burst. "But not too bright."

Thompson was swearing like crazy behind him. His SAW had run out of

ammo and jammed at the same time. He was frantically trying to clear the breech. Freidman peered back at his buddy and saw another alien bearing down on him.

"Joey, look out!"

Thompson looked up, saw the creature, and swung his useless weapon at it like a club. The butt of the SAW slammed into the alien's mouth â€" at least it looked like a mouth â€" and knocked it over. Thompson cast aside the SAW and leapt on the creature, his combat knife in hand. Freidman looked back in time to see another alien emerge mere yards away. He emptied a full magazine into its head.

Then all fell suddenly quiet again. That unearthly hushâ€¦

Thompson padded back into the office, covered in green slime, wiping his combat knife on his vest. He stared at the broken SAW and shook his head.

"I don't think Kyle and those idiots are comin' back man. I think we better get the fuck out of here. Those assholes come back at us again, we ain't gonna be able to hold them off."

Freidman nodded, and walked over to his stinking companion. Thompson drew his sidearm and wandered outside, stepping over the mutilated corpse of his recent kill. The two Marines cautiously started to cross the cargo yard.

End
file.